

extend to the troubling racial and regional disparities in the Federal system, as documented by the Department of Justice September 2000 report.

As my colleagues are aware, I oppose the death penalty. I have never made any bones about that. But this is not really about just being opposed to the death penalty. This is about bias-free justice in America. I am certain that not one of my colleagues in the Senate—not a single one—no matter how strong a proponent of the death penalty, would defend racial discrimination in the administration of that ultimate punishment. The most fundamental guarantee of our Constitution is equal justice under law, equal protection of the laws. To be true to that central precept of our national identity, we have to take extremely seriously allegations that the death penalty is being administered in a discriminatory fashion.

So I urge the Attorney General, in the strongest possible terms, to reconsider his actions and direct the National Institute of Justice to continue its study, with outside experts, of the racial and regional disparities in the Federal death penalty system. I also urge him to provide the NIJ whatever resources may be needed to complete this study. This is the only course consistent with the promises he made during his confirmation hearing.

Furthermore, with Mr. Garza's execution still scheduled to take place and the NIJ study at a standstill, I urge the Attorney General to postpone Mr. Garza's execution until these questions of fairness are fully answered. The case of Mr. Garza—a Hispanic and convicted in Federal court in Texas—implicates the very issues at the center of the unfairness reflected in the DOJ report. It would be wholly illogical and unjust to go forward with plans for the execution of Mr. Garza and subsequent executions until the NIJ's study is completed and fully reviewed. It would be a great travesty of justice, as well as a great diminution in the public's trust in the Federal criminal justice system, if the Federal Government executed Mr. Garza and the NIJ later completed its study, which corroborated racial or regional bias in the administration of the Federal death penalty.

The integrity of our system of justice demands no less.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

COMMENDING SENATOR FEINGOLD

Mr. REID. Before my friend from Wisconsin leaves the Chamber, I would like to say that I have always been very impressed with the Senator from Wisconsin. I may not always agree with him on the issues—but most of the time I do—but one reason I am so impressed with him is he is always so thorough and has such a conviction about the issue of which he speaks. Whether it is an issue dealing with for-

eign policy or a country the name of which most of us have trouble pronouncing, he understands what is going on in that country and the human rights violations that take place.

I never had the opportunity to say publicly to my friend from Wisconsin how impressed I am with his intellectual capabilities and his ability to express them in this Chamber. I do that now and congratulate him.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator very much.

SENATE PAGE RECOGNITION

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, this Friday is graduation day for the Senate pages. These young men and women are some of the hardest working employees of the Senate. They have a grueling schedule. Many people don't know that the pages go to school from 6:00 a.m. until the Senate opens, and are here even past the time the Senate gavels out. In the past few weeks we have had several late evenings, sometimes not leaving until after midnight. While most of the Senate employees go home and go to sleep, the pages do not. After work the pages have homework and studying to do. Their work is never done.

They do an invaluable service for the United States Senate and get little acclaim. However the experience is extraordinary and one they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Over the past semester the pages have been witness to several historical events. The State of the Union, the passing of the largest tax cut in history and being a part of an evenly divided Senate.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize each page and the State that they represent.

Republicans: Kendall Fitch, South Carolina; Jackie Grave, Missouri; Elizabeth Hansen, Utah; Joshua Hanson, Indiana; JeNel Holt, Alaska; Adrian Howell, Mississippi; Eddie McGaffigan, Virginia; Mary Hunter (Mae) Morris, Alabama; Jennifer Ryan, Idaho; Megan Smith, Kentucky; O. Dillion Smith, Vermont; Garrett Young, New Hampshire;

Democrats: Libby Benton, Michigan; Steve Hoffman, Vermont; Alexis Gassenhuber, Wisconsin; Kelsey Walter, South Dakota; Michael Henderson, South Dakota; Kathryn Bangs, South Dakota; Tristan Butterfield, Montana; Lyndsey Williams, Illinois; Joshua Baca, New Mexico; Andrew Smith, Texas.

Congratulations to you all on a successful semester as a Senate page. We wish you the best of luck as you encounter all future challenges. Thank you for your patronage and service to the U.S. Senate.

IN HONOR OF MR. WILLIAM T. KOOT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to honor a distinguished Ne-

vadan, a good man, and a good friend, Mr. William T. Koot. On June 8, 2001, Bill will be retiring from the Clark County District Attorney's office after nearly 30 years of service.

When Chief Deputy District Attorney William T. Koot retires on Friday, the people of Clark County, NV, will lose a wonderful advocate.

Bill has been the heart and soul of the Clark County District Attorney's Office for decades. The leadership that he has provided, the examples that he has set, the standards of integrity that he has insisted upon for himself and for others, are immeasurable. He is a terrific trial lawyer, an outstanding legal scholar, a leader in the community, an effective prosecutor, and most importantly, a good friend.

Bill's legacy of service to the State of Nevada is long and remarkable. He joined the Office of the District Attorney in 1972, after having served 3 years in the United States Marine Corps and acquiring his law degree from the University of San Diego.

During his nearly 30 years of service, Bill has tried literally thousands of cases. Of his 132 jury trials, Bill has successfully prosecuted and obtained 93 guilty verdicts. He has supervised with distinction dozens of prosecutors, and during the past 6 years, he has headed the office's major violators unit.

As Clark County District Attorney Stewart Bell has said, Bill Koot will truly be missed. I extend to him my most sincere congratulations and the appreciation of all Nevadans for his good work on our behalf.

KIDS AND GUNS

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the June issue of the journal *Pediatrics* reports the results of a disturbing study on children and guns. A journal article describes an experiment conducted by researchers from Emory University School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta-Egleston Hospital. The researchers wanted to determine how sixty four eight to twelve year old boys would behave when they found a handgun in a presumably unthreatening environment.

Researchers placed groups of two or three boys in a room with a one way mirror. Two water pistols and an actual .380 caliber handgun were concealed in separate drawers in the room. When left alone for a mere 15 minutes, nearly three quarters of the groups found the handgun. Of those groups, more than three quarters handled the guns. And 16 boys—one out of every four in the study—actually pulled the trigger. And none of these boys knew that the gun was not loaded. Perhaps most distressing is the fact that more than 90 percent of those who handled the gun or pulled the trigger had some form of gun safety instruction.

Despite this study and countless other examples of the potentially lethal implications of mixing kids and guns, the National Rifle Association